



State of Utah

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COMPLETED PROJECTS CLOSE 151 DANGEROUS ABANDONED MINES

The Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining's Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program has completed work on two projects, closing 151 dangerous mine openings. The Blue Notch-White Canyon project closed ten openings in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The Temple Mountain project sealed 141 sites in Emery County's San Rafael Swell, about 20 miles north of Hanksville.

Temple Mountain is a popular recreation area and abandoned mines often attracted unwary adventurers. During construction work ATV tracks were noticed inside several of the mines. On two separate occasions during the project abandoned explosives were discovered requiring an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team from Tooele Army Depot to dispose of them. Just one of many examples of the dangers lurking in abandoned mines.

"Abandoned mines in Utah have killed five people and injured more than two dozen others over the last two decades," said Mark Mesch, Administrator of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program. "Many people are attracted to them and think exploring them is an adventure, but the truth is they are a tragedy waiting to happen.

"There was vandalism at both of these project sites during construction," continued Mesch. "Whether the vandalism stemmed from a perceived threat to the environment or anger at being denied access to someone's idea of adventure we don't know, but we do know it often undoes our work leaving people exposed to risk of injury or death."

The Temple Mountain project used a variety of techniques to close the openings, included the use of polyurethane foam that allows for closing a vertical shaft without altering its historic appearance. Other mine openings were backfilled, sealed with concrete block walls, or rebar grates. Bat grates were installed on five mines that allow bats to continue to use them as habitat.

Work on the Temple Mountain project began last March and concluded May 18, 2002 and cost just over \$176,000.

The Blue Notch-White Canyon project was conducted in cooperation with, and funded by, the National Park Service. The project was completed May 15, 2002 and is the third time the Division has teamed with the National Park Service to complete work within their boundaries.

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